

I. RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO ALARMS

A. Receiving an alarm

1. Under normal circumstances, the Conover Fire Department will be dispatched by the Catawba County Communications Center (Fire Central), when the public has reported an emergency.
 - i.) All members should respond to the alarm if possible.
 - ii.) All directions provided by Fire Central and the officer in charge should be followed.

B. Responding to an alarm

1. Members should use their best judgement in responding to call.
 - i.) Not every call requires an emergency response.
 - ii.) Non-emergency calls such as washdowns should be run routine traffic, without lights and sirens.
2. In most cases, firefighters and fire officers should respond directly to the scene unless otherwise directed.
3. Qualified apparatus operators should report to the station.
4. On duty Engineers will respond the first due apparatus.
5. Any additional apparatus response is dependent upon volunteer / part-time staff and/or off-duty engineers.
 - i.) Only the necessary apparatus should respond based on the nature of the incident and the STANDARD APPARATUS RESPONSE guidelines contained in this document.
 - ii.) Additional available driver/operators should stand-by at the station for additional incident or report to the scene if additional personnel are needed.
6. The Incident Commander should decide upon the action to be taken, with the response need being sized up quickly upon arrival.
 - i.) In order to reduce the risk of unnecessary accidents, apparatus and personnel that are not needed on the scene should be instructed to respond routine traffic to either the scene or the station.

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C. Responding in private vehicles

1. When responding in private vehicles, remember that a red light does not provide you with any privileges; you are merely asking other motorists to allow you the courtesy of free passage.
2. Members are subject to all traffic laws including speed limits and stop signs.
3. When arriving on the scene, park in a location and manner that does not obstruct emergency vehicle traffic in the area.
 - i.) If necessary to park on the shoulder of the street or highway, all vehicles should park on the same side as the incident.
 - ii.) This will eliminate the need to cross traffic and is especially important on I-40 and other multi-lane highways.
4. Seat belts are to be worn at all times by members regardless of responding in fire apparatus or personal owned vehicles.

D. Responding in department vehicles

1. Fire apparatus will be operated only by a qualified member who has been trained and approved by Conover Fire Department.
 - i.) All fire apparatus drivers should be sure of the location of the incident before leaving the station.
 - ii.) Maps are provided and should be used for this purpose.
2. The first responding apparatus will repeat the location of the call when checking en route, with the first arriving apparatus verifying the location of the incident when checking on scene.
 - i.) Fire Central should acknowledge these units.
 - ii.) Additional units responding should check en route and on scene, but acknowledgement by Fire Central is not necessary.
3. ***Only certified members of a fire department will ride in apparatus during emergency responses.***
4. ***All vehicle occupants must be in a seated position and must wear the safety belts provided.***

E. Special Cautions

1. When responding to an emergency in a fire department vehicle, you are granted certain privileges.
 - i.) Speed limits, stop signs, traffic lights, and other laws are not applicable to fire department vehicles.
 - a.) In order for these special privileges to be granted, the warning lights and siren must be in operation at all times.
 - b.) This does not relieve the driver from any responsibility if the driver of the vehicle is involved in or causes an accident by the driver's own fault or is found to be at fault.
 - ii.) Do not assume that you have been seen or heard by other motorists; always expect the unexpected.
 - a.) Many drivers may not see or hear you, and if they are surprised by the sudden presence of a fire apparatus, they may panic and react in an unexpected or unreasonable manner.
2. Special caution will be exercised at all railroad crossings, intersections, and congested areas.
3. If approaching a stopped school bus, **STOP**.
 - i.) Proceed only after the driver signals you to do so.
4. Apparatus operators are responsible for the apparatus until it is returned to the station and returned to service.
 - i.) It is the apparatus operator's responsibility to see that the apparatus and all equipment are cleaned, replaced, refueled, etc.
 - ii.) The apparatus operator should direct members at the station after the incident in returning the apparatus to service.
 - a.) The officer in charge will assign members to assist in clean-up duties.
 - 1.) Routine apparatus cleaning necessary between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. will be completed

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after 8:00 a.m. on the following morning by the on-coming duty Engineer.

II. **PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES**

A. Purpose

1. To establish Fire Department guidelines covering the parking and maintenance of private owned vehicles at all City of Conover Fire Departments by all fire department personnel.

B. Scope

1. This Standard Operating Guideline is concerning parking and maintenance of privately owned vehicles (POV's) and is designed to allow department personnel (those with permission) the opportunity to perform minor maintenance or repairs on their privately owned vehicles.
2. It is not intended as a means for providing Fire Department facilities and/or equipment to be used for major or extensive repairs or maintenance on privately owned vehicles.

C. Policy

1. Privately owned vehicles of all departmental personnel will be parked in the designated parking spaces located at the City of Conover Fire Stations.
2. No privately owned vehicle(s) will be parked in front of the apparatus bay doors and/or apparatus apron at any time.
3. Members responding to the station for apparatus response to an alarm and/or incident are not to block or delay apparatus response.
4. All fire department personnel that are either riding or operating apparatus will have their privately owned vehicle(s) parked in the designated parking areas prior to leaving the fire station.
5. No private vehicles, including motorcycles; are to be in the station unless they are being washed or maintenance is being performed on the vehicle.
6. All departmental personnel are to inform the on-duty engineer prior to any activity being performed.
7. No privately owned vehicles, including motorcycles are to be in the station unless they are actually being worked on with the permission of a chief officer or the on-duty engineer.
 - a) The fire department will not assume liability for damage to any privately owned vehicles brought into the station.

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8. Department personnel cannot store broken vehicles or abandoned vehicles on department property. If this situation occurs, such vehicles are subject to towing at the owners expense.
9. Department personnel wishing to wash their own privately owned vehicles can do so on department property.
 - a) It is recommended that the on-duty engineer be made aware prior to doing so.
 - b) Private vehicles may be washed inside the station. The responsibility of insuring that that fire station(s) are left in neat and orderly appearance is the responsibility of the member.
10. Repairing and/or washing private vehicles shall be done in authorized areas only.
11. In the event of City water shortage, the washing of private vehicles at the Fire Stations will be suspended.
12. Injuries incurred while washing privately owned vehicles or performing maintenance and/or repairs on private vehicles while on duty will not be considered a compensational injury, and, as such, any maintenance and/or repairs performed are at the individual's own risk.
13. Washing private vehicles while on duty shall be considered as maintenance.
14. Due to limited parking facilities, employees are not to leave private vehicles parked at any City of Conover Fire Station for any extended period unless involved in business directly related to the department.
15. Any and all maintenance to privately owned vehicles is to be performed after normal working hours.
16. The maintenance and/or repairs are to be of a minor nature that will not interfere with the fire department's response to alarms/incidents or with the security of the Fire Station property and/or Fire Station equipment and apparatus.
 - a) Department personnel must use their own equipment to perform maintenance on their privately owned vehicle(s).

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17. Certain situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case incident (i.e., annual City of Conover luncheon at Fire Station One, large gatherings, department socials).

III. EMERGENCY VEHICLE RESPONSE POLICY

- A. Conover Fire Department places a great deal of responsibility on the drivers of our emergency vehicles.
 - 1. Emergency vehicle drivers have in their care, custody and control most of the major assets possessed by this organization (the vehicle, portable equipment, and personnel).
 - 2. Emergency vehicle drivers also have a higher standard of care to provide to the general motoring public and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others.
 - 3. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk and exposure to potential losses during each and every response.
 - 4. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must always remain, the first priority of all emergency vehicle drivers.
 - 5. In order to accomplish this enormous task all emergency vehicle drivers shall become familiar with, and abide by the following policies and procedures.
- B. Circle of Safety
 - 1. Prior to entering the cab and starting the vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver shall make a circle of safety around the vehicle to see that all equipment is secured, that all compartment doors are securely closed and any physical obstructions moved out of the way.
 - 2. During the circle of safety the driver should encircle the vehicle and visually inspect all four sides of the vehicle before entering the cab.
 - 3. He/she should also verify right side and rear clearance with the person riding in the officer position.
 - i.) This should be conducted prior to moving the vehicle regardless of whether or not the vehicle is about to leave on an emergency or non-emergency.
- C. Warning Devices and Emergencies
 - 1. When responding to an emergency, all audible and visual warning devices should be operated at all times.

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2. All drivers must understand that warning devices are not always effective in making other vehicle operators aware of your presence.
3. Warning devices only request the right-of-way; they do not insure the right-of-way.

D. Vehicle Control and Right-of-way

1. All drivers shall attempt to maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and general public.
2. Drivers should be aware that the civilian vehicle operators might not react in the manner in which is expected or felt appropriate.
 - i.) An attempt should be made to have options available when passing or overtaking vehicles.
 - ii.) If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver can not force the right of way, nor can you assume the right of way, therefore you do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you.
3. The emergency vehicle driver should be aware of his/her rate of closure on other vehicle and pedestrians at all times to make sure that a safe following distance is established and maintained.

E. Response Speeds

1. When responding to an emergency, drivers should operate the vehicle at a safe speed associated with the type vehicle being driven.
 - i.) Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include but are not limited to:
 - a.) Slippery road conditions
 - b.) Inclement weather
 - c.) Poor visibility
 - d.) Heavy or congested traffic conditions
 - e.) Sharp curves

F. Intersection Practices

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1. Extreme care should be taken when approaching intersection, as they are the locations responsible for a large percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles.

G. Uncontrolled Intersections

1. Any intersection that does not offer a control device (stop sign, yield or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle or where a traffic control signal is green upon approach of the emergency vehicle all emergency vehicle drivers should do the following:
 - i.) Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.).
 - ii.) Observe traffic in all four directions (left, right, front, rear).
 - iii.) Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot.
 - iv.) Change the siren cadence when approaching the intersection
 - v.) Avoid using the opposite lane of travel if at all possible
 - vi.) Emergency vehicle drivers should always be prepared to stop.
 - vii.) If another vehicle driver fails to yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver can not force the right of way, nor can you assume the right of way, therefore you do not have the right of way until the other vehicle yields to you.

H. Controlled Intersections

1. Any intersection controlled by a stop sign or a red traffic light requires a complete stop by the emergency vehicle driver.
 - i.) In addition to bringing the vehicle to a complete stop these additional steps should be followed as well:
2. Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic
3. Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.) as well as driver options

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4. Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot, continue to scan in four directions (left, right, front, rear)
5. Change the siren cadence when approaching the intersection
6. Scan the intersection for possible passing options and avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible
7. Establish eye contact with other drivers; have partner communicate all is clear, reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped

I. Railroad Intersections

1. At any time an emergency vehicle driver approaches an unguarded rail crossing he/she shall bring the apparatus to a complete stop before entering the grade crossing.
 - i.) In addition the emergency vehicle driver should perform the following prior to proceeding:
2. Turn off all sirens and air horns
3. Operate the motor at idle speed
4. Open the windows and listen for a train's horn

J. Non-emergency Response

1. When responding to a non-emergency call or in normal flow of traffic the vehicle shall be operated without any audible warning or visual warning devices and in compliance with state motor vehicle laws.

K. Ordinary Travel Procedures

1. Drivers should obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any fire department vehicle under ordinary travel conditions.
2. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or driving any vehicle in an aggressive manner may be subject to disciplinary action including, suspension of driving privileges.

L. Riding Policy

1. The department requires all persons riding on fire apparatus to be seated in approved riding positions and be secured by seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion.

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2. The department prohibits the riding on tailboards, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position.

M. Seat Belts

1. Seat belts shall be worn at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
2. Personnel responding to any Conover Fire Department activity or call shall wear seat belts while operating POV's.
3. In the situation of SCBA seats personnel shall not disconnect the seat belt to don SCBA.
4. Should the donning of SCBA hinder the operation of the seat belt or require its removal the SCBA should be donned prior to the apparatus moving or after it arrives on scene and comes to a complete stop.

N. Backing

1. The department recognizes that backing emergency vehicles is made hazardous by the fact that the driver is limited in what he/she can see behind the vehicle.
2. Whenever possible drivers should avoid backing.
3. When it is necessary to back-up apparatus drivers should follow one of the two following measures:
4. Before an apparatus is put into reverse a spotter should be placed near the rear of the vehicle.
5. The spotter should be safely positioned so that the driver can see them at all times.
 - i.) If at any time the driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she shall stop until the spotter makes himself/herself visible again.
 - ii.) If conditions exist that make the use of spotters impossible, drivers should make a circle of safety to see that; no person is directly behind the apparatus or in its intended path of travel; all equipment is secured and that all compartment doors are securely closed; any physical obstructions are moved out of the way.
6. The driver should also note all potential obstructions in the intended path of travel.

O. Response in Private Owned Vehicles

1. While it is recognized that timeliness to an emergency is important, it is imperative that all drivers understand that their private vehicles are not emergency vehicles and therefore are not exempt from State Motor Vehicle laws.
2. Any driver observed operating any vehicle in an aggressive or unsafe manner will be subject to disciplinary action including, suspension, loss of driving privileges and withdrawal of emergency light privileges.
3. All personnel are responsible for all traffic laws and standards as issued by the State of North Carolina in regards to responding to an emergency.

P. Vehicle Equipment on Private Owned Vehicles

1. Once a member has been cleared to respond on emergency calls, which is normally after a probation period, he / she shall be authorized to equip their personal vehicle as specified in the applicable standards as listed in the Motor Vehicle Laws of North Carolina.
2. It is recommended that the member attend and successfully complete a North Carolina Emergency Vehicle Driving course prior to equipping their personal vehicle with emergency warning lights.
3. Junior Members are not permitted to equip their personal vehicle with emergency warning lights nor are they authorized to respond emergency traffic in their POV.
4. Vehicle equipment as installed for emergency response shall be utilized in response to a legitimate alarm or emergency.
5. Once routine response has been issued or cancel has been acknowledged by either an apparatus operator, officer or the Incident Commander, all responding personnel shall cease to operate any emergency response equipment in or on personal vehicles and return to their respective stations to standby.

Q. North Carolina Motor Vehicle Laws

1. All personnel are expected to operate their personal vehicles in a responsible and sensible manner and with due regard for the safety of others.

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2. All personnel are responsible for all traffic laws and standards as issued by the State of North Carolina in regards to responding to an emergency.

R. Personal Owned Vehicle Placement and Staging

1. All privately owned vehicles are expected to be placed in a safe location as related to the emergency incident and so as to not interfere with emergency scene operations.
2. Privately owned vehicles should be parked on the same side of the road as the incident in order to facilitate the traffic flow and the safe movement of any incoming equipment.
3. Privately owned vehicles should park beyond and prior to the incident leaving adequate space for emergency vehicles.